



Drum roll please... Announcing the 2015-2016 Anexa FVC Top Reproductive Performance Winners

By Katrina Roberts, Herd Health Veterinarian

On the back of a wet spring, getting enthused for mating may seem like a difficult task, but we have some fellow farmers that can hopefully inspire you.

The overall reproductive performance for the Anexa herds (that pregnancy tested with us) last season was still on par with the previous season (which had been constantly improving year on year), and above the general average for the Waikato (according to the LIC dairy Statistics). This is good news and means that we are working together to achieve good results.

There are lots of farmers that are achieving close to or above the national target of 78% 6 week incalf rate. In our records we had 64 farms that were 75% or above, which will give you 5 stars on your fertility focus report, and another group of 60-70 farmers who are just off the pace sitting between 70 and 75%.

The overall winners were Carlos Alatorre, herd manager for Bruce and Aidie Haultain and hot on his heels was Ross and Shayley Wallis, with herd manager, Robert Puke from Raglan. These herds were compared not only on six week in-calf but on comparable not-incalf rates after 8 weeks of mating and their final not-incalf rate at the end of their mating period. Both these herds mated for less than 10 weeks.

For our reproduction farm staff training workshop we ran recently at Steve and Lynelle Roach's farm, Katie Denholm and I interviewed some of these top performing repro herds to find out what they were focussing on around mating time that led to their success. Attention to detail was the common theme from these top performing herds with comments like

'doing heat detection paddock checks 4 X per day',

'being really fussy touching up and looking at tail paint',

'really taking care of the AB cows on the day of AB',

'being really organised and not getting stressed'.

It just goes to show that more effort leads to better results!

Top Reproductive Performance Bruce and Aidie Haultain, Carlos Alatorre



Runner Up Top Reproductive Performance Ross and Shayley Wallis, Robert Puke



Got 2 mintues? to hear your thoughts about lameness

Results are in from the lameness survey,

← check them out here.

“I’m putting one less cow up a day during AB, but that’s okay isn’t it?”

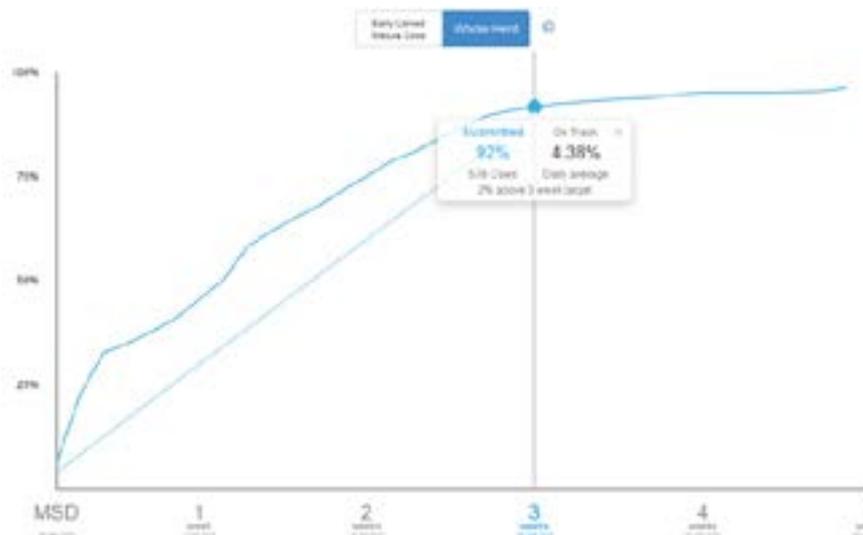
Let’s do the sums.

We all know that the target 3 week submission rate is 90%. In order to achieve target 3 and 6 week in-calf rates (54% and 78% respectively), this submission rate is not negotiable. Herds that achieve these in-calf targets are all achieving a 3 week submission rate of 90%. That said, the national average for the 3 week submission rate is only 80%, which means 75% of herds are not achieving the 90% target.

To achieve a 90% 3 week submission rate, we need to submit 4.3% of the herd every day for the 21 days. For a 300 cow herd, that equals 13 cows per day. If we only submit 12 cows per day over this period, then by the end of week 3 we have only hit 84%, which is NOT good enough.

Trying to monitor this on a daily basis is more difficult, as we won’t get even numbers every day. We also have factors such as CIDRs and synchrony programmes that will also upset the daily pattern. There are some useful tools available on Minda Web and on the Minda mating Apps to help monitor your daily submission rate. The graph below, which is updated daily, can easily demonstrate if you are dropping below the target line. The herd below used CIDRs on day one for non-cyclers and used a prostaglandin synchrony programme in the cycling cows as well, which is the second big jump in the second week, and then things flatten off in week 3.

If you do not use the graph to monitor your performance, you can do a quick calculation: number of cows to be mated minus the number of cows CIDR’d multiplied by 90% and divided by 21 days. This will be the number of cows daily (e.g. 300 cows – 30 CIDRs = 270 cows * 90% = 244 cows/21days = 11.6/day. So if 30 CIDRs are used in a 300 cow herd at the beginning or before PSM, then we need 12 cows daily not the original 13.



The Table 1 shows a herd using early non-cycler treatment and a Why Wait – Pg program. They are above target (dotted blue line) submission rate for the entire first 3 weeks.

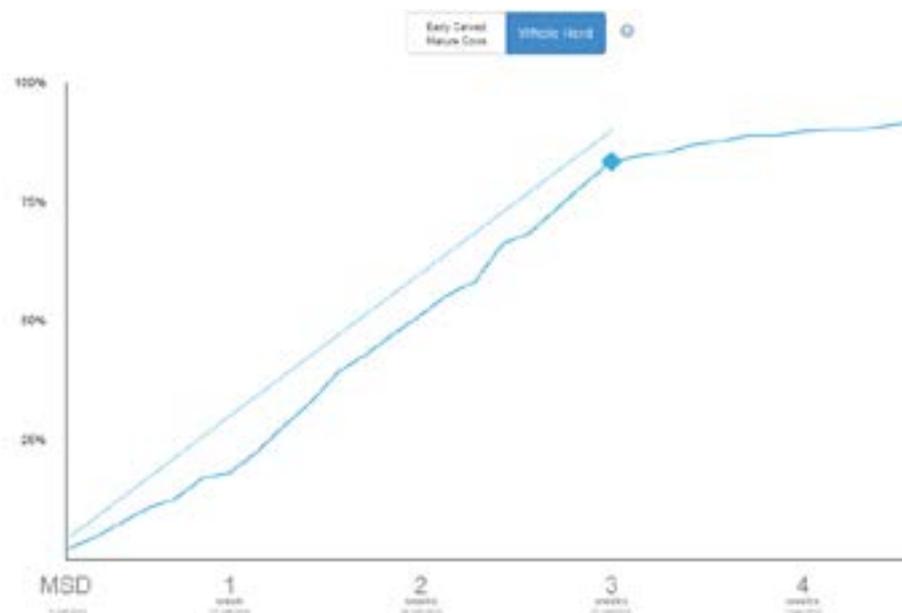


Table 2. On this farm, it is clear from early in mating that the target submission rate (the dotted line) would not be reached without some intervention. Treating the non cyclers after the first week would have helped here.



Important points for managing your young stock over the next few weeks:

Calves on farm:

- ✓ Hopefully all your replacement calves are out on pasture now, but they should still be getting 10 - 12% of their bodyweight as liquid feed per day.
- ✓ Don’t wean them off milk until they are eating 1 – 1.5kg of meal per day and weigh 90kg.
- ✓ Drenching for parasites should begin once they’ve been on pasture for a few weeks; in young calves oral drench is usually more effective and much cheaper than pour-on.
- ✓ Drenches containing Abamectin are dangerous to use on calves weighing less than 120kg.
- ✓ Most meal contains additives to prevent infection with Coccidia. Keep an eye out for scouring or ill-thrift in the weeks following removal of meal feeding.
- ✓ Blackleg vaccination can be given at any age, and the sooner the better to prevent sudden death once out on pasture. Remember that they need a booster shot 4 weeks later.
- ✓ Lepto vaccination can be given once calves are at least 12 weeks old; your local clinic should be contacting you to organise this.

Improving Bull Performance

Conception rates in dairy herds are dictated by AB management and by bull management. Bull numbers are often underestimated in New Zealand. There is no doubt that bulls can be a costly and messy addition to your farming enterprise, but getting bull management right helps to promote a condensed and efficient calving pattern, ultimately influencing the reproductive success of your herd.

There are three aspects to bull management which should be considered:

1) Bull selection

Selecting bulls that are tall enough to service your cows is paramount. Bulls that are too short or under-grown will not be able to perform. Usually, selecting two year old bulls is a good idea for your herd as yearling bulls are often too small.

BVD testing and vaccination is also vital to prevent the detrimental effects on fertility caused by the BVD virus. There is no point in vaccinating animals for BVD that have not first been tested clear of the virus. Bulls born with BVD will not respond to vaccination, so animals should be tested first to prove they are not persistently infected (PI). BVD vaccination is a two shot vaccination programme with the booster given four weeks after the initial injection. Bulls need two shots before they are ready to work so the BVD vaccination programme needs to begin five to six weeks before bull mating begins.

Anexa FVC offers a bull fertility testing service. This involves collection of a semen sample from an animal and immediate examination of the sample under a microscope to assess sperm quality. A bull 'firing blanks' will not get your cows in calf, so identification of these bulls is important.

2) Bull power

The InCalf book recommends bull numbers depending on the number of cows still not pregnant at the end of the AB period. Intuitively, the longer you do AB for, providing submission and conception rates during the AB period are reasonable, the more cows will be in calf. The table (shown below) estimates the number of bulls needed depending on cow numbers and the percentage of the herd pregnant at the start of the bull mating period. **Remember that these numbers are the numbers of bulls that are needed in with the herd at any one time, so essentially you will need to double these numbers to allow for resting bulls.**

3) Bull day to day management

Bulls become fatigued and will not inseminate cows effectively if they are tired. Resting your bulls for two to three days and working them for two to three days is advisable. Alternatively, day and night bulls can be used.

Lame bulls should be swapped out immediately. Lame bulls will be infertile because they often have high temperatures and will be less keen to mount cows. It is obviously easier to swap out lame bulls if they are leased. Bought in bulls will also need to be monitored closely too, but may be less easy to swap out. In any case, you will need enough bulls to have bulls resting, and possibly having spare bulls on farm should be considered.

Likely % Of Herd Pregnant At Start Of Bull Mating

No. cows in milking herd	Very low (less than 40%)	Low (40-50%)	Moderate (50-70%)	High (more than 70%)
100	2-4	2-3	2	2
200	5-6	4-5	3	2
300	7-8	6	4-5	3
400	9-11	7-8	5-6	3-4
500	12-13	9-10	7	4-5
600	14-15	11-12	8-9	5-6

Table reproduced from DairyNZ's InCalf Bull Management Practices Tool.



Rising two year olds (on or off farm):

- ✓ Heifers should be cycling well now, as any that are pre-pubertal before the start of mating are likely to end up late calving or empty.
- ✓ Because they take longer to start cycling again after calving, we recommend starting heifer mating 10 days before the main herd.
- ✓ Hopefully you have individual weights for your heifers; they should be at least 300kg now (+/- about 30kg for breed variation). If you put these weights into MINDA you can easily compare each cow directly with her liveweight BV to check she's on track.
- ✓ Parasites tend to be less of a problem in older animals, but you still need to maintain some sort of drench program. Because a lot of graziers only have young animals on their property, parasite levels can be quite high in pasture.
- ✓ If you haven't already taken action to make sure their Copper and Selenium levels are adequate, talk to your Vet before supplementing this close to mating.

Contact your clinic to develop a comprehensive young stock management plan. This can be an excellent tool to use when working with graziers, and for making sure that the timing of important health events don't get missed. To avoid this, book your spring blood sampling in today - healthy cows lead to healthy conception rates.

Struggling with High Bulk Tank Somatic Cell Counts?

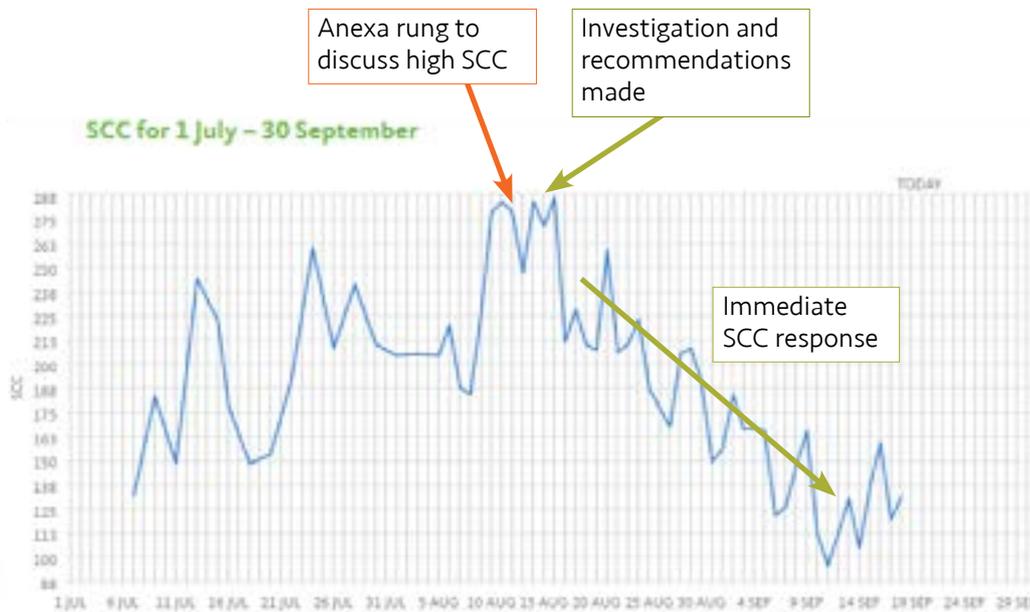
Every season is different and we have seen some farms with BTSCCs sitting higher than usual this season. Taking steps to remedy this is especially important for those herds planning to go onto once a day milking later in the season or those herds chasing incentives from dairy companies.

Machine and rubberware related performance are very important as they have a huge influence not only on milking speed but teat condition and mastitis risk. If there are issues these will become more apparent now and over the next couple of months with cows being exposed to the machine for more milkings and cups being on for longer over peak production.

Some simple checks of milking machine function that can be performed daily are:

- **Read the vacuum gauge** – do you have a record of what it should be?
- **Listen to pulsators** – they should all sound the same.
- **Observe cows during milking** - unsettled cows may indicate a problem with the environment, or milking machine.
- **Check air admission holes (vents)** – the claw bowl may flood during milk flow. This can lead to more cup slip, slow or incomplete milking, and difficulty removing clusters even after the vacuum is cut off.
- **Check milk is entering the receiver can and flowing in smoothly.**
- **Check teats as the cups come off** – look for teat end damage, any colour changes (reddish, bluish or purplish skin colour) or swelling, hardness at the top, middle or tip of the teats.
- **Check that cows are milking out properly** - split liners, holes in the pulse tubes or short milk tubes, or faulty pulsators can be causes.

The 350 cow herd below had a BTSCC around 100,000 this time last year and after investigating we found issues with the vacuum pressure and automatic cup removers. We were able to make effective changes which immediately dropped the SCC and improved cow comfort at milking.



If you are concerned with your bulk tank somatic cell count or are keen to lower it then contact your local vet. We also have a number of vets with further training in mastitis management and milk quality control that can assist you.

FARMER WORKSHOP

Lameness Training Wednesday 26 October

Find out more at www.anexa.co.nz/events or see the registration form enclosed.



0800 2 THE VET | anexafc.co.nz

Coromandel
P: 07 866 8556
Gordonton
P: 07 824 2103

Huntly
P: 07 828 7660
Maramarua
P: 09 232 5891

Matamata
P: 07 888 8068
Morrinsville
P: 07 889 5159

Ngaruawahia
P: 07 824 8630
Ngatea
P: 07 867 7256

Paeroa
P: 07 862 8815
Raglan
P: 07 825 8390

Rototuna
P: 07 853 0027
Te Aroha
P: 07 884 8014

Te Kauwhata
P: 07 826 3581
Thames
P: 07 868 7005

Got 2 minutes? to hear your thoughts about lameness

By Hanneke Officer, veterinarian at Anexa FVC Gordonton

Thanks to everyone who participated in our lameness survey. We have now collated, tallied and abbreviated and summarised the results and would like to share our conclusions with you.

Our main reason for sending out this survey was to gauge farmer perception of lameness in our area and to get a 'finger on the pulse' so to speak as to what we can do to help reduce the prevalence by improving prevention as well as evaluating treatment regimes to maximise efficacy.

We had 100 farmers fill in the survey with an average of 377 cows and an average estimated lameness prevalence of 6.4%.

Key results were:

1. Almost half of the respondents named tracks and races as a main risk factor/ cause of lameness and a third (also) mentioned stones. Did you know that there are farms out there with appalling tracks and NO lameness? In contrast, new conversions in the South Island have perfect races and a high prevalent of lameness! Only 5% of respondents reported management as a cause of their lameness. Educating staff is much more enjoyable and much cheaper than redoing races, and doesn't have to wait until the dry period to be undertaken!
2. The bigger the herd, the higher the prevalence. Herds with less than 300 cows had an average of 4% lameness, herds between 300 and 500 cows averaged 5% and herds over 500 cows scored 12%.
3. In 39% of herds, lame cows were kept out of the main herd for less than a week. Several studies have been completed researching the impact of lameness on various aspects and general consensus shows lingering pain perception 28 days post treatment. Lame cows have lower feed intakes and lose BCS, and therefore in addition to their lameness they have to combat these additional effects. Therefore, the longer they are looked after out of the main herd the better.
4. 36% of farms do not use any type of hoof block (e.g. cowslip). Studies have shown a significant reduction in pain perception and improvement in lameness score when cowslips or blocks were used as part of the treatment of lame cows. Faster recovery time means less long-term effects of being lame.
5. Only 35% of herds used anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g. Metacam 20 or Key). The benefit (both in cost and in animal welfare) of the use of these treatments has been proven both in and out of the field. Significant reduction in recovery time and increase in appetite (and therefore production) are well-known effects.
6. The choice and use of antibiotics in cases of lameness are in contrast with current international guidelines and goals in at least 20% of herds surveyed. Routine antibiotics are really only indicated in footrot infections, and on most farms footrot would only cause about 5-10% of lameness. Therefore, most antibiotics use in lame cows are a waste of money!

These results are a selection of the survey findings. They present an eye opener for us and should hopefully get you thinking as well. They will form the basis for the next **lameness workshop which will be held on Wednesday 26th October 2016**

If you would like to know more or want to sign up for the workshop, please get in touch with your local Anexa FVC clinic or visit www.anexafvc.co.nz/ events. Collectively, we can work on reducing lameness by improving prevention through increased awareness.



**Congratulations to Chris Townson
on winning the Shoof Prize Pack**



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FARMER WORKSHOPS

Lameness Workshop

REVAMPED!!! More than just a practical training session. Aimed at experienced farmers we will discuss the findings of the lameness survey, how you can apply them to your herd and more.

Wednesday 26th October

Presented by Hanneke Officer

VENUE: Anexa FVC Morrinsville, 25 Moorhouse Street

TIME: 11.00am - 1.00pm (lunch provided).

COST: \$100 clients, *Members we encourage you to use your 50% off voucher*
\$150 non Anexa FVC clients

RSVP: By Friday 21st October to Leeanne,
email: anexa.events@anexafvc.co.nz or phone 07 889 5159

For further information or to register visit www.anexa.co.nz/events

